

**LAKE WASHINGTON BOULEVARD VEGETATION MANAGEMENT PLAN
PUBLIC MEETING #2: LAKESIDE UNIT**

Thursday, August 31, 2006

Rainier Community Center

MEETING SUMMARY

Staff Members Present: Mark Mead, Senior Urban Forester; Katie Moller, Urban Forester; Jon Martin, Northeast District Crew Chief; Lisa Beyeler, Planning Intern

Meeting: The purpose of the meeting was to present maintenance opportunities for the development of the lakeside along Lake Washington Boulevard and to share ideas and listen to the neighbor and communities hopes and concerns for the proposed Vegetation Management Plan (VMP) for Lake Washington Boulevard.

The meeting was held from 6:30-8:30pm. About 10 community members attended and most everyone participated in the discussion with lots of questions and comments about the Vegetation Management Plan.

The focus of the meeting was a presentation that included a summary of the University of Washington study of Lake Washington Boulevard, the current progress of the Vegetation Management Plan with Seattle Parks and Recreation, an in-depth examination of a section of the lakeside, and a visualization exercise. These presentations were intended as a starting point to elicit ideas from the community.

The University of Washington study was conducted by undergraduate students in the Landscape Architecture program under professors Iain Robertson and Daniel Winterbottom. Using the 1903 Olmsted design of Lake Washington Boulevard and their vision for the greater Seattle metropolitan region as well as the 1986 study of Lake Washington Boulevard by the firm EDAW, the students began generating ideas and concepts for the management of vegetation along the Boulevard.

The University of Washington students proposed many thought-provoking models for the lakeside along Lake Washington Boulevard. Their key concept was native vegetative drifts of varying sizes and species count to be placed strategically along the lakeside to promote framed views as well as habitat for wildlife. The students also proposed a plant palette for the lakeside that included anchor, emergent, upland, and specialty plantings.

Since the University of Washington studio ended in the spring of 2006, Seattle Parks and Recreation has spent the summer reviewing their plans as well as looking for ways to practically implement their maintenance concepts.

Seattle Parks and Recreation staff identified areas along the lakeside that would be prime areas for these proposed vegetative drifts as well as taking inventory of existing drifts of invasive, native and mixed vegetation. This study as well as photo visualizations of the proposed aesthetic of the lakeside were presented to the public to facilitate dialogue.

The materials proved to be a good catalyst for a broad discussion of the opportunities presented by the lakeside unit of the Vegetation Management Plan. With the input from this meeting, Parks Urban Forestry staff will put together a draft Vegetation Management Plan for presentation on October 26th at 6:30pm at Rainier Community Center.

**Written
Comments:**

- Planting more trees may shade areas where unprotected sunlight is currently enjoyed is problematic
- There is currently a plan to widen the pathway in Stan Sayres. This needs to be reconciled with the VMP
- Distinction is needed between the undesignated footpath and the walkway pavement.
- Juvenile salmon need stippled shade and low water depth.
- Sedges and rushes are listed as part of the lakeside palette, but wouldn't sedges and rushes survive on dry land.
- The importance of views seems to be surpassing the importance of habitat for wildlife and ecology. The VMP needs to further address habitat and ecology.
- The Olmsted design seems outdated a century later. I am unsure of the relevance of the design in our modern day.
- Lawn areas need to be reduced to combat problems with geese.
- Specimen trees are appropriate for the arboretum, but not for Lake Washington Boulevard.
- A further densification of vegetation along Lake Washington Boulevard brings about concerns of safety and visual access. Many people walk on the Boulevard and their safety may be at risk with dense plantings.
- Residents along the Boulevard have allergy problems, and the planting of more trees may put them at risk for allergic outbreaks.
- Access to the shoreline should be somewhat restricted. Too much access to the shoreline causes erosion [reference to New York City shoreline and erosion problems there]. With the mayor's plan to increase the population by 60%, unlimited access could pose a potential threat to the integrity of the shoreline.
- Neighborhood groups are planting cedars and willows near the shoreline and the cedars are doing quite well.
- The VMP will need to address the problem of beavers.
- Willow stakes should be taken to the lakeside and planted.

- Ornamental hedges along the lakeside and near the parking lots are unattractive and do not fit the aesthetic of the Boulevard.
- The proposed drifts are aesthetically dated. Single species drifts are especially problematic and not a part of the Olmsted vision.
- *Spiraea douglasii* can be an impenetrable thicket and obscure views.
- The conflict between the Olmsted aesthetic and habitat for wildlife is non-existent. The Olmsted Brothers were sensitive to natural landscapes and ecology.
- It is very important that the entire Boulevard is cohesive to preserve the Olmsted legacy. Native habitat and recreational needs (habitat vs. human use patterns) were very important to Olmsted.
- The holly plants proposed might become problematic as they produce berries whose seeds can be spread by birds.
- *Berberis thunbergii* can be invasive.